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THE INFERNAL COUNCIL

The purpose of this study is to trace the development of the "Infernal Council" from Claudian and the Gospel of Nicodemus, through Robert de Boron, Boccaccio, Sannazaro, Vida, and Tasso, to Milton.¹

I

At the end of the fourth century of our era, Claudian composed two Latin poems, *In Rufinum* and *De Raptu Proserpinae*, which had a very great influence upon later writers, especially because of the descriptions of councils in Hell with which they begin. The *In Rufinum* was intended both as an invective against Rufinus, the ambitious minister of Arcadius, Emperor of the East, and as a bit of flattery for the Western Emperor and for his general Stilicho. Rufinus is represented as an envoy of Hell, the monsters of which have sat in solemn conclave and determined that the world is too happy. As war on Heaven seems likely to prove disastrous, it is resolved to accept the suggestion of Megaera, to send her foster-child Rufinus to wreak ruin among men.²

The opening scene in *De Raptu Proserpinae* is likewise an infernal council, called this time by Pluto, who is enraged because he is

¹ Professor E. H. Wilkins, now of the University of Chicago, suggested this subject to me some years ago, when I was under his instruction at Harvard University. While Professor Wilkins has been helpful in many ways in the assembling of the materials for this article, he is in no sense responsible for the conclusions reached.

² See T. R. Glover, *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*, Cambridge, 1901, p. 220.

unmarried.¹ The upshot of the argument is that Ceres, scenting disaster, hides her beautiful child Proserpine in Sicily. As soon as Pluto voices his complaint, Lachesis begs him not to run the risk of waging war on Heaven. "Ask Jupiter, and a wife will be given," she pleads. Then Maia brings her son Mercury before him. Pluto, seated on his horrible but majestic throne, speaks to his winged messenger, railing against his brother Jupiter, who, he declares, not satisfied with excluding him from the light of day, has hindered him from procuring a spouse.

There were numerous models for Claudian's infernal councils in earlier poetry, such as the council of the gods in the *Aeneid* x. Nevertheless, much as Claudian owed to Virgil,² in the *De Raptu Proserpinae* he appears to have imitated especially the beautiful Homeric hymn to Demeter.³ The council of the gods summoned by Jupiter, described in the Greek poem, became the infernal council in the Latin imitation, a change which had many parallels in the later history of the subject.⁴

Attention is called to the following passages from the *In Rufinum* and the *De Raptu Proserpinae* which were imitated, as we shall see, by later writers:

Invidiae quondam stimulis incanduit atrox
 Alecto, placidas late cum cerneret urbes.
 Protinus infernas ad limina taetra sorores,
 Concilium deforme, vocat. Glomerantur in unum
 Innumerae pestes Erebi, quascumque sinistro
 Nox genuit fetu: Nutrix Discordia belli,
 Imperiosa Fames, leto vicina Senectus
 Impatiensque sui Morbus Livorque secundis
 Anxius et scisso maerens velamine Luctus
 Et Timor et caeco praeceps Audacia vultu
 Et Luxus populator opum, quem semper adhaerens
 Infelix humili gressu comitatur Egestas,
 Foedaque Avaritiae complexae pectora matris
 Insomnes longo veniunt examine Curae.
 Complentur vario ferrata sedilia coetu
 Torvaeque collectis stipatur curia monstis.

¹ See T. R. Glover, *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*, Cambridge, 1901, p. 244.

² *Ibid.*, p. 233.

³ Vss. 313 ff.

⁴ See L. Cerrato, "De Claudii Claudiani fontibus in poemate de Raptu Proserpinae," in *Rivista di Filologia*, Turin, IX (1881), 278.

Alecto stetit in mediis vulgusque tacere
Iussit et obstantes in tergum reppulit angues
Perque umeros errare dedit.¹

At nos indecores longo torpebimus aevo
Omnibus eiectae regnis?²

Iam quaecumque latent ferali monstra barathro
In turmas aciemque ruunt, contraque Tonantem
Coniurant Furiae, crinitaque sontibus hydrys
Tisiphone quatiens infausto lumine pinum
Armatus ad castra vocat pallentia manes.³

. . . . Tunc talia celso
Ore tonat—tremefacta silent dicente tyranno
Atria, latratum triplicem compescuit ingens
Ianitor et presso lacrimarum fonte resedit
Cocytos tacitisque Acheron obmutuit undis
Et Phlegethontaeae requierunt murmura ripae.⁴

. . . . Tantumne tibi saevissime frater
In me iuris erit? Sic nobis noxia vires
Cum caelo Fortuna tulit? Num robur et arma
Perdidimus, si rapta dies? An forte iacentes
Ignavosque putas, quod non Cyclopia tela
Stringimus aut vacuas tonitru deludimus auras?
Nonne satis visum, quod grati luminis expers
Tertia supremæ patior dispendia sortis
Informesque plagas, cum te laetissimus ornet
Signifer et vario cingant splendore Triones?⁵

II

We may consider Claudian, despite his possible familiarity with the Scriptures,⁶ as the chief source of a *pagan* tradition in descriptions of infernal councils. For a *Christian* tradition, let us examine the so-called gospel of Nicodemus, which, according to Gaston Paris and Alphonse Bos, is really based on two Greek manuscripts, united

¹ *In Rufinum*, I, 25–43. I quote from *C. Claudiani Carmina*, ed. Jeep, Leipzig, 1876.

² *Ibid.*, 58, 59.

³ *De Raptu Proserpinae*, I, 37–41.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 83–88.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 93–102.

⁶ See Glover, p. 242.

by a certain Ananias or Aeneas in 425.¹ The first of these manuscripts, which is the Gospel of Nicodemus proper, is of little interest to us, being intended merely to give information on the passion of Christ supplementary to what is found in the New Testament. It is the second manuscript which contains an infernal council. This manuscript itself goes back to a manuscript of gnostic origin of the first half of the third century, the Greek form of which is anterior to the middle of the fourth century. It relates the descent of Christ into Hell, his victories over Hades and Satan, and the baptism of sinners. At considerable length an infernal council held over Christ's prospective entrance into the lower world is described. Satan tells Hades of the miracles accomplished by Christ, who comes as an all-powerful invader to take back the captives.

Probably about the end of the fifth century, the manuscript of Ananias or Aeneas was translated into Latin. The Latin translation was in turn rendered into French about the beginning of the thirteenth century by André de Coutances; also by a so-called Chrétien (first half of the thirteenth century); and by an anonymous author in the fourteenth century (MS C in the Paris-Bos edition). The account of the infernal council, in the French version, continues through several hundred lines.

III

At the beginning of his *Merlin*, Robert de Boron inserted an infernal council. As a result of this council, Merlin is brought into the world, born of a virgin, but, unfortunately for the devils, so innocent that he turns all his power for harm to a good purpose. In the *Merlin*, however, the time of the council is set later than in the *Nicodème*. Christ has already entered Hell; Adam, Eve, and the other captives have been released; and humanity has been safeguarded through baptism from the deceits of the evil one. The devils rehearse their grievances, such as their exclusion from Heaven, and the diminishing number of their victims, and determine to obtain their revenge by creating an anti-Christ to combat the saving doctrines of Christianity. Robert de Boron reduces the entire description of the council to three pages. Yet, despite so much abridgement,

¹ *L'Évangile de Nicodème*, ed. Paris and Bos, Paris: Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1885, pp. ii and iii.

there is often a pretty close textual resemblance between the *Merlin* and the *Nicodème*.¹

Note in particular the following passages in the *Merlin*, which were imitated by later writers:

Qui est chis hom qui nous a enforchiés et nos ferm(et)és brisies si que nule chose que nous eussions reposite ne pot estre celee encontre lui (et) que il n'ait fait trestout chou que il lui plaist?²

Et nous alames, si presimes ichiaus qui che disoient que cil qui lors verroit en terre les deliverroit des painnes d'infer. . . . Si nous a tolu chou que nous avons perdu et chou que nous aviens saisi, que nous n'i poo(n)s riens prendre contre lui.³

Ore les avons tous perdus par le lavement que il font, si que nous n'avons nul pooir sour iaus dessi que il revignent (a nous) par oeuvres que il font.⁴

Et plus encore, que il (a) laissié menistres en terre qui les sauveront, ja n'averont tant fait de nos oeuvres, se il s'en voient repentir et nos oeuvres guerpir et faire chou que li menistre lour diront.⁵

Cil qui plus nous ont neut, che sont cil qui (plus) di(s)ent de sa venue en terre.⁶

Il i a tel de nous qui bien puet prendre samblance d'omme et conchevoir en feme.⁷

IV

Boccaccio, in his *Filocolo*, follows on the whole the narrative of the *Cantare di Fiorio e di Bianciflore*,⁸ which is probably itself derived from a French source. Nevertheless, not satisfied with what he contemptuously calls the "fabulosi parlari degli ignoranti,"⁹ he undertakes to lend to the simple tale of *Fleur et Blanchefleur* a grandiose significance. To that end, he borrows heavily from classical mythology and from the Scriptures, and even attempts to impose an epic

¹ *Merlin*, ed. Paris and Ulrich, Paris, Société des Anciens Textes Français, 1886, Introduction. Cf. *Nicodème*, ed. cit., loc. cit.

² *Merlin*, p. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Ed. Crescini, Bologna, 1889-99, Vol. I, p. 462.

⁹ *Filocolo*, Vol. I (=Boccaccio, *Opere volgari*, Vol. VII), Florence, 1829, p. 7.

form upon his narrative.¹ For such an ambitious project, what better material could he find than the Biblical story of the tragic fall of o'erweening Satan, and of the creation and temptation of man? Boccaccio's predilection for scriptural matter leads him to introduce this epic narrative at least three times into the *Filocolo*. Let us call these three accounts, for convenience, A, B, and C.²

In A, after promising to tell the story of Florio and Biancofiore, Boccaccio suddenly relates the conflict between Jupiter and Pluto. Jupiter drove Pluto out of Heaven for his ambition, and assigned to him and to his followers the dismal kingdom of Dis. The empty seats of the fallen angels were filled with a new generation, of whom Adam and Eve were the parents. Pluto succeeded in tempting man to sin, thus driving him out of Eden "alle sue case." Jupiter then sent his son to liberate the men who were imprisoned in Dis, and also to provide them with arms so that they might defend themselves against the snares of Pluto. So effective were these weapons, that it was impossible for Pluto's forces to resist them.

At this point, the mission of St. James to Spain is suddenly introduced. Then, for a few pages, Boccaccio practically follows the *Cantare*. However, when he comes to describe Lelio's preparations for an expedition to the shrine of St. James in fulfillment of a vow, Boccaccio returns to his epic theme. He depicts Pluto as being so greatly agitated over the expedition of Lelio that he holds an infernal council over the matter. It is there decided that Pluto, disguising himself as the governor of Marmorina, is to prevent the expedition by "la paura."

In B, which is the infernal council proper, the events related in A are recited as grievances—in somewhat more summary style. There remains C, where much of the matter in A and B is recited by Ilario, as the preface to the scriptural lessons which he imparts to Florio.

Boccaccio, in narrating briefly the conspiracy of devils enraged at the victories of Christ, naturally owes little to classical sources. We may even suspect that some of his paraphernalia of proper names was taken not from Latin authors but from Dante, whom he follows

¹ See Crescini, *Contributo agli studi sul Boccaccio*, Turin, 1887, p. 200, n. 3.

² *Filocolo*, Vol. I, pp. 10, 11; 18, 19; Vol. II (= *Opere volgari*, Vol. VIII), pp. 309 ff.

for example in using the word Dis to refer to a city instead of to a god.¹ Boccaccio seems to have followed pretty closely the *Merlin* of Robert de Boron, or one of the Italian versions of it, such as the *Vita di Merlino* or the *Storia di Merlino* of Paolino Pieri, the former having a longer account of the conclave in Hell than the latter.² However, if Robert de Boron welds his epic matter fairly well with the story of a marvelous magician, Boccaccio is less successful in thrusting the same story into the history of a simple pilgrimage into Spain.

Boccaccio follows Robert de Boron in putting the infernal council after the descent of Christ into Hell and the liberation of the sinners.³ Both versions are characterized by a recital of grievances against the Almighty, as follows:

a) The descent of Christ into Hell, and the rescue of the captives.

b) The safeguarding of the captives against further deceits and assaults of the enemy. Robert de Boron, following the *Évangile de Nicodème*, represents the captives as protected through baptism. Boccaccio, on the other hand, is anxious to give a more warlike tone to his romance. He therefore represents St. James as a knight battling for Christianity; speaks of the converts to Christianity as knights, and consistently calls their religious doctrines "armi." Of course, there was plenty of scriptural authority for these figures of speech.

c) In the *Merlin*, one of the grievances is the sending of ministers to warn men against Satan and his wiles. This feature does not occur in B, but in A Boccaccio speaks of the mission of St. James to convert the Occident.

d) In the *Merlin*, the enemy decides to work against Christ for revenge, operating through fear. In the *Filocolo*, Pluto decides to wreak his revenge by frightening Lelio and his party.

e) In the *Merlin*, the devil takes the "sambulance d'homme."⁴ In the *Filocolo*, Pluto takes the appearance of the governor of Marmorina. It is thus not necessary to appeal to general mediaeval

¹ Cf. *Inferno*, ed. Grandgent, Boston, 1909, Canto VIII, vs. 68, note.

² *Storia di Merlino*, ed. Sanesi, Bergamo, 1898, p. lxxiii.

³ See Crescini, *Fiorio e Biancifioro*, Vol. I, p. 151.

⁴ *Merlin*, p. 3.

tradition, as Crescini does, for the explanation of Pluto's supposed power to assume the shape of a man.¹

The principal contribution of Robert de Boron to the story of a conclave in Hell was, it will be recalled, to relate events happening later than in the *Évangile de Nicodème*. The principal contribution of Boccaccio, on the other hand, was to go farther back than either the *Merlin* or the *Évangile*. To Robert de Boron's list of grievances he adds, (a) The expulsion of Pluto and his demons from Heaven by Jupiter; (b) The creation of man, to occupy the seats of the fallen angels; and he boasts of, (c) Tempting man to disobey his maker. Now all these items are found—in almost identical language—in A, B, and C—a fact which confirms our observation regarding Boccaccio's predilection for scriptural—or supposedly scriptural—matter.

The following extracts from B are quoted for purposes of reference:

Il miserabile re . . . pensò di volergli ritrarre da sì fatte imprese con paura; e convocati nel suo cospetto gl' infernali ministri, disse: compagni, voi sapete che Giove non dovutamente degli alti regni i quali possiede ci privò, e diecci questa strema parte sopra il centro dell' universo a possedere; e in dispetto di noi creò nuova progenia, la quale i nostri luoghi riempiesse: noi ingegnosaute gli sottraemmo, sicchè noi volgemmo i loro passi alle nostre case: e egli ancora, non parendogli averci tanto oltraggiato, mandò il suo figliuolo a spogliarcene, al quale non possendo noi resistere ci spogliò; e dopo tutto questo fece avveduti gli abitanti della terra de' nostri lacciuoli, e donò loro armi colle quali essi leggiermente le nostre spezzano; e che noi di questi oltraggi ci abbiamo a vendicare sopra di lui. Il salire in su c'è vietato, ed egli è più possente di noi, però ci conviene, pure con ingegno, il nostro regno aumentare, e fare di riavere ciò che peraddietro abbiamo perduto.²

Ond' io ho proposto di volergli almeno ritrargli dell' andare gli strani templi visitando con paura.³

. . . e provvide di nuova generazione volere riempiere l'abbandonate sedie. . . .⁴

V

Sannazaro's *De Partu Virginis* (1526) is connected with the subject of the infernal council because of two passages, (a) David's long prophecy concerning the life of the Messiah, including his descent

¹ Crescini, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 152 ff.

² *Filocolo*, Vol. I, pp. 18, 19.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

into Hell and his liberation of the captives; (b) the address of God to the blessed in Heaven, at the beginning of Book III. The prophecy of David comes after the angel Gabriel has returned to Heaven after the Annunciation. The speech of the Father follows the account of the joyful behavior of Joseph and Mary at the birth of Jesus, and is followed by a scene in which the shepherds hear the angel chorus proclaiming that a son is given. In his speech, God recounts the triumphs of the divine will over Satan, who has attempted to usurp the throne of Heaven, and exhorts his angels to rejoice over the birth of Christ.

In the first two books of the *De Partu Virginis* Sannazaro was indebted to classical sources for little more than a few passages such as the description of the monsters in Hell, found at the close of Book I.¹ On the other hand, he was inspired to a great extent by the Scriptures, and somewhat by the *Filocolo*, which he had already imitated in his *Arcadia*.² The long prophecy of David regarding the life of the Messiah is no doubt modeled on the similar long medley of Biblical history recited by Ilario to Florio. The address of the Father in Book III is an imitation of the address of Pluto to his minions in the *Filocolo*, the rôles of the speakers being inverted, the Father reciting as triumphs what Pluto had rehearsed as grievances:

Aetherei Proceres (neque enim ignoratis et ausus
Infandos, dirumque acies super astra frementes)
Si mecum iuvat antiquos ab origine motus
Inspicere, et veterum pariter meminisse laborum:
Quandoquidem haec vobis peperit victoria laudem:
Huc animos, huc pacatas advertite mentes.
Vos, quum omne arderet caelum servilibus armis,
Arctorumque furor pertenderet impius axem
Scandere, et in gelidos regnum transferre Triones:
Fida manus mecum mansistis: et ultima tandem
Experti, caelo victricia signa tulistis.³

The following passage from the prophecy of David is based on a collection of scriptural passages, on the plan of the long speech of Ilario in the *Filocolo*:

Ipse catenato fessus per tartara collo
Ducetur Pluton: tristi quem murmure circum

¹ See F. Flamini, *Il Cinquecento*, Milan, p. 106.

² See *Arcadia*, ed. Scherillo, Turin, 1888, pp. li-lvii.

³ Book III, p. 76. I quote from the edition of Rome, 1877.

Inferni fractis moerebunt cornibus amnes.
 At nos virgines praecinctorum tempora lauru,
 Signa per extensos caeli victricia campos
 Tollemus, laetoque Ducem clamore sequemur.
 Victor io, bellator io, tu regna profunda,
 Tu Manes, Erebumque, Potestatesque coërces
 Aërias, Letumque tu sub Numine torques.
 Ille alto temone sedens, levibusque quadrigis
 Lora dabit, volucresque reget placido ore iugales,
 Non iam cornipedum ductos de semine equorum.¹

For his descriptions of scenes in Hell in Book I, however, Sannazaro imitated Claudian and Virgil.

The following description of the commotion produced among the powers of the deep by the triumphant approach of Christ is imitated freely from the *De Raptu Proserpinae*:

Intremuere Erebi sedes, obscuraque Ditis
 Limina: suspirans imo de corde Megaera
 Dat geminum, et torvas spectat sine mente Sorores.
 Tum caudam exululans sub ventre recondidit atram
 Cerberus, et sontes latratu terruit umbras:
 Commotis niger Cocytus inhorruit antris:
 Et vagas Sisyphiis haeserunt saxa lacertis.²

The description of the monsters of the deep, which slink into their holes at the approach of Christ, is imitated closely from Virgil's account of the monsters seen by Aeneas in Hades:

. . . diffungiant immisso lumine dirae
 Eumenidum facies iactis in terga colubris.
 Quas atro vix in limo Phlegethontis adustum
 Accipiat nemus, et fremanti condant in ulva.
 Tum variae pestes, et monstra horrentia Ditis
 Ima petant: Trepident Briareia turba,³ Cerastae,
 Semiferumque genus Centauri, et Gorgones atrae,
 Scyllaeque, Sphingesque, ardentisque ore Chimaerae,
 Atque Hydrae, atque Canes et terribiles Harpyiae.⁴

¹ Book I, p. 34. Cf. Psalms, 68:18; II Colossians, 5:15; I Colossians, 15:26; Revelation, 20:2 and 14.

² *De Partu Virginis*, I, 30. Cf. *De Raptu Proserpinae*, I, vss. 83-88, cited above, p. 171.

³ *Briareia turba*, from *De Raptu Proserpinae*, III, vs. 188. *Cerastae*, from *De Raptu Proserpinae*, II, vs. 346. See Lewis and Short's *Latin Dictionary*, Oxford, 1896.

⁴ *De Partu Virginis*, I, 33. Cf. *Aeneid* vi. 275 ff.

The description of the monsters in the *De Partu Virginis*, as we shall see, influenced Vida, Tasso, and Milton. The following line probably also was imitated by Tasso:

. . . . liceat rumpentem cernere portas
Aëratas. . . .¹

VI

The action of the *Christiad* (1535) of Vida begins with the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem, in the last year of his ministry. Stopping at the house of Zaccheus, the Savior is informed by a messenger of the death of Lazarus. He departs to restore Lazarus to life, and Satan calls a council of his demons, who, alarmed by the success of Christ's mission on earth, determine to combat God by persuading the Rabbis to persecute his son. In his impassioned harangue, Satan recounts the past victories of God, who, not content with driving the rebellious angels out of Heaven, is preparing to send his son into Hell itself, to rescue the captives.

For his description of the conclave in Hell, Vida borrowed from the *Filocolo* and the *De Partu Virginis*. Vida and Boccaccio represent the chief demon's harangue as beginning with a stirring appeal to the memory of an unjust expulsion from Heaven, and of a valorous struggle against the Almighty. The following statements of grievances may be compared with the passages from the *Filocolo* quoted above.

In partemque homini nostri data regia caeli est
Nec satis: arma iterum molitur²
Id propter juvenem aetherea demisit ab arce
Iamque aderit, fretusque armis caelestibus ille
Sedibus exitium vehit his, et regna recludet
Infera, concessasque animas nostra eximet orbe
Irrita tentamenta, dolos et vim exiit omnem.³

It will be noted that Vida follows Boccaccio even in the use of the rather characteristic word "arms," which Boccaccio had substituted for the "baptism" which he had found in the *Merlin*.

¹ *De Partu Virginis*, I, 31.

² Here, as elsewhere, Vida seems to have been influenced by the style of Claudian. Cf. the lines *Nonne satis visum*, etc., quoted above, p. 171.

³ *Christiad*, I, 182-202. I quote from the edition of London, 1732.

The opening lines of the speech of Satan to his followers in the *Christiad*, on the other hand, were imitated directly from a passage in the *De Partu Virginis*,¹ which was itself modeled, as we have observed, on a speech of Pluto in the *Filocolo*. The things which God, in addressing the blessed in Heaven, recounts approvingly as triumphs in the poem of Sannazaro, are included in the list of grievances found in Satan's harangue in Vida's poem. Thus Vida remodeled the verses of his predecessor, just as Claudian had transformed the divine council of Zeus to a conclave of demons in Hades.

A comparison will readily show to what an extent the speech in the *Christiad* is a counterpart of that in the *De Partu Virginis*. The Father begins with the words "Aetherei proceres"; Satan says "Tartarei proceres." Then follow parentheses, in which Vida paraphrases Sannazaro:

Tartarei proceres, caelo gens orta sereno,
(Quos olim huc superi mecum inclementia regis
Aethere dejectos flagranti fulmine adegit,
Dum regno cavet, ac sceptris multa invidus ille
Permetuit, refugitque parem), quae praelia toto
Egerimus caelo, quibus olim denique utrimque
Sit certatum odiis, notum et meminisse necesse est.
Ille astris potitur, parte et plus occupat aequa
Aetheris, ac poenas inimica e gente recepit
Crudeles: pro sideribus, pro luce serena
Nobis senta situ loca, sole carentia tecta
Reddidit.²

¹ The influence of Sannazaro upon Vida has been a matter of controversy. G. Moroncini (*Sulla "Cristiade" di M. G. Vida*, Trani, 1896, p. 45) is inclined to deny such an influence. Cotronei, in the *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, XXI, 364, reviewing Moroncini's book, emphasizes three resemblances between the *Christiad* and the *De Partu Virginis*: (1) The scene of the Virgin weeping at the cross; (2) The description of the Limbus; (3) The enumeration of the people who came to be recorded in the census taken under Augustus. G. Morpurgo, in a volume inaccessible to me entitled *La poesia religiosa di Iacopo Sannazaro*, Ancona, 1909, maintains that there is indisputable evidence of the imitation of Sannazaro in the *Christiad*. (See *Romanic Review*, I [1910], 450.)

E. Yardley (*Notes and Queries*, 10th series, I [1914], 249) observes that in the *Christiad*, V, there is the episode of "Fear" called forth by Satan to frighten Pilate. Have we not here the "paura" on which Pluto laid so much stress in his speech in the *Filocolo*?

² *Christiad*, I, 167 ff.

The following lines in the *Christiad* are imitated from the prophecy of David in the *De Partu Virginis*:

Fors quoque nos, nisi non segnes occurrimus ipsos
 Arcta in vincla dabit, vinctosque inducet Olympo
 Victor, ovans; superi illudent toto aethere captis.¹

For his description of the monsters of the deep, Vida has imitated Claudian, Sannazaro, and especially Virgil:

Continuo ruit ad portas gens omnis, et adsunt
 Lucifugi coetus varia atque bicorpora monstra,
 Pube tenus hominum facies, verum hispida in anguem
 Desinit ingenti sinuata volumine cauda.
 Gorgonas hi, Sphyngasque obsceno corpore reddunt;
 Centaurosque, Hydrasque illi, ignivomasque Chimaeras;
 Centum alii Scyllas, ac foedificas Harpyias,
 Et quae multa homines simulacra horrentia fingunt.
 At centum-geminus flammanti vertice supra est
 Arbiter ipse Erebi, centenaque brachia jactat
 Centimanus, totidemque eructat faucibus aestus
 Omnes luctificum fumumque, atrosque procaci
 Ore, oculisque ignes, et vastis naribus efflant.²

The first lines in this passage are imitated from the *De Raptu Proserpinae*,³ and the names of the monsters are nearly all taken from Virgil; but the passage was probably inspired in the first place by Sannazaro, who adds "Sphinges" to the list found in the *Aeneid*, a change which Vida adopts.

VII

The infernal council in the *Gerusalemme Liberata* is found in the fourth Canto of that epic. The military operations of the Christians have been going well. Pluto, alarmed at their progress, calls a council of war in Hell, at which it is decided to send the fair Armida to work havoc among the Christians. In his harangue, Pluto relates how he and his followers have been expelled from Heaven, and how man—made of vile clay—has been put in their places. Nor was this sufficient: God sent his son, who broke the gates of Hell, and took back with him many souls.

¹ *Ibid.*, I, 190 ff. Cf. the fifth and following lines in the second passage from the *De Partu Virginis* quoted above on pp. 177 f, and the last line of the first passage.

² *Christiad*, I, 139 ff.

³ See the third passage quoted above, p. 171.

For his description of the infernal council, Tasso drew upon Virgil, Claudian, Boccaccio, Sannazaro, and Vida.¹

In the following passage, Tasso seems to be indebted not only to Vida, but also to Boccaccio:

x

E in vece del dí sereno e puro,
De l' aureo sol, de gli stellati giri,
N'ha qui rinchiusi in questo abisso oscuro;
Né vuol ch'al primo onor per noi s'aspiri:
E poscia (ahi quanto a ricordarlo è duro!
Quest' è quel, che piú inaspra i miei martiri)
Ne' bei seggi celesti ha l'uomo chiamato,
L'uom vile e di vil fango in terra nato.

xi

Né ciò gli parve assai; ma in preda a morte,
Sol per farne piú danno, il figlio diede.
Ei venne, e ruppe le tartaree porte,
E porre osò ne' regni nostri il piede,
E trarne l'alme a noi dovute in sorte.²

Ne' bei seggi is here very much like Boccaccio's *abbandonate sedie*,³ and

Né ciò gli parve assai; ma in preda a morte,
Sol per farne piú danno, il figlio diede

¹ The influence of Vida upon Tasso has been a subject of remark for the last three centuries (see Solerti, in a review of V. Vivaldi's *Sulle fonti della Gerusalemme Liberata*, *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, XXIV [1894], 257). Solerti quotes here from MS Magliabechiano II. IV. 192, cc. 305-306, where the note is made: "Nel IV, conciglio (sic) del diavolo, dal Vida, *Cristiade*, I, donde è tratta gran parte dell' orazione." Solerti observes that G. B. Olivi, in his *Concilium Inferorum*, is indebted to Vida and to Tasso. Rosini, in his edition of the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, has worked out in great detail the indebtedness of Tasso to Vida and to Claudian in stanzas iv-xi. Vivaldi, in *La Gerusalemme Liberata studiata nelle sue fonti*, Trani, 1907, p. 25, gives some additional resemblances between Tasso and Vida.

² I quote from the edition by Ferrari, Florence, 1907. Rosini hints at the indebtedness of Tasso to Boccaccio: "Questa orazione di Pluto è da conferirsi con quella del medesimo attribuitogli dal Boccaccio nel primo libro del *Filocolo*, ivi: '*Compagni, voi sapete ec . . .*'" (Canto IV, ix, note). A similar assertion is made by F. de Sanctis, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, Bari, 1912, Vol. I, p. 285. S. Multineddu, in his *Fonti della Gerusalemme Liberata*, Turin, 1895, pp. 52 ff., denies this connection between the *Gerusalemme* and the *Filocolo*, and associates Tasso's infernal council with that in Robert de Boron's *Merlin*. Flamini, in his *Cinquecento*, p. 516, apparently accepts Multineddu's conclusions. On the other hand, Multineddu (p. 22) agrees with Guastavini, D'Ancona, and others in associating the episode of Olindo and Sofronia with the burning at the stake of Florio and Biancofiore related in Book VI of the *Filocolo*. Cf. Solerti, *op. cit.*, p. 264. Vivaldi (*op. cit.*, pp. 32, 33) denies the connection between the *Gerusalemme* and the *Merlin* on the one hand and the *Filocolo* on the other. Cf. review by Proto in *Rassegna critica della letteratura italiana*, I, 67.

³ *Filocolo*, Vol. I, p. 10.

certainly recalls

. . . . e egli ancora, non parendogli averci tanto oltraggiato, mandò il suo figliuolo.

Furthermore, the enumeration of grievances is made more formally by Tasso than by Vida, after the style of the *Filocolo*, thus: (1) *N'ha qui rinchiusi*; (2) *E poscia*; (3) *Né ciò gli parve assai*. Both Tasso and Boccaccio have little parentheses denoting exasperation: "Quest' è quel che più inaspra" and "non parendogli averci tanto oltraggiato."

For the opening lines of Pluto's speech, Tasso follows Vida very closely, as will appear on comparison of the following lines with those in Vida beginning "Tartarei proceres":

ix

Tartarei numi, di seder più degni
Là sovra il sole, ond' è l'origin vostra,
Che meco già da i più felici regni
Spinse il gran caso in questa orribil chiostra;
Gli antichi altrui sospetti e i fieri sdegni
Noti son troppo, e l'alta impresa nostra.
Or Colui regge a suo voler le stelle,
E noi siam giudicati alme rubelle.

x

Ed in vece del dì sereno e puro,
De l' aureo sol, de gli stellati giri,
N'ha qui rinchiusi in questo abisso oscuro.¹

The imitation of Vida by Tasso amounts in some places almost to a translation. At the end of stanza xi, however, Tasso appears to have gone directly to Sannazaro for his inspiration:

Vincitor trionfando, e in nostro scherno
L'insegne ivi spiegar del vinto Inferno.

For this Sannazaro has:

. . . . et ultima tandem
Experti, caelo victricia signa tulistis

and

Signa per extentos caeli victricia campos
Tollemus, laetoque Ducem clamore sequemur.
Victor io, bellator io.²

¹ The passage from Vida is quoted above, p. 180.

² See above, pp. 177 f.

Vida has

Arcta in vincla dabit, vinctosque Olympo
Victor, ovans.¹

Only Vida and Sannazaro here refer to the captivity of Satan and his demons. The display of the captured trophies of Hell, however, is mentioned solely by Sannazaro and Tasso.

For his description of the monsters of the deep, Tasso imitated Virgil, Sannazaro, and Claudian:

iv

Tosto gli dèi d'Abisso in varie torme
Concorron d'ogn' intorno a l' alte porte.
Oh come strane, oh come orribil forme!
Quant' è ne gli occhi lor terrore e morte!
Stampano alcuni il suol di ferine orme,
E 'n fronte umana han chiome d'angui attorte;
E lor s'aggira dietro immensa coda,
Che, quasi sferza, si ripiega e snoda.

v

Qui mille immonde Arpie vedresti e mille
Centauri e Sfingi e pallide Gorgoni;
Molte e molte latrar voraci Scille,
E fischiar Idre, e sibilare Pitoni,
E vomitar Chimere atre faville,
E Polifemi orrendi e Gerioni;
E in nuovi mostri, e non più intesi o visti,
Diversi aspetti in un confusi e misti.

The first line of stanza iv is apparently imitated from the *De Raptu Proserpinae*:

Iam quaecumque latent ferali monstra barathro
In turmas aciemque ruunt.²

Sannazaro's addition of "Sphinges" to the list found in the *Aeneid* is adopted by both Vida and Tasso. Sannazaro also has "Canes," in addition to "Scyllae." Tasso mentions "Cerberus" farther on, but there he is probably imitating another passage from Claudian. On the other hand, in the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, Tasso copies

¹ See above, p. 181.

² See above, p. 171.

even this detail from Sannazaro: "E latrar cani mostruosi."¹ *Gerioni*, in Tasso, indicates clearly that the author was directly imitating Virgil's "forma tricorporis umbrae."

In the *Christiad*, Briareus is depicted as the master of the deep. Tasso follows Sannazaro and Virgil, putting Polifemi (for Briareus?) on a plane with the other monsters, but in his description of Pluto is influenced by the picture of Briareus in the *Christiad*.

The description of the council of the Furies in the *In Rufinum* may have had some influence on Vida and Tasso.

Tasso probably went directly to Claudian for the following lines, although there are also close verbal resemblances with Sannazaro:

iii

Treman le spaziose atre caverne,
E l'aer cieco a quel romor rimbomba.

viii

Mentre ei parlava, Cerbero i latrati
Ripresse, e l'Idra si fe' muta al suono;
Restò Cocito, e ne tremâr gli abissi;
E in questi detti il gran rimbombo udissi.²

In the following lines, Tasso was doubtless imitating the *De Raptu Proserpinae* and the *In Rufinum*:

xiii

Noi trarrem neghittosi i giorni e l'ore,
Né degna cura fia che 'l cor n'accenda?

¹ V, 3. For the influence of Sannazaro upon Tasso, see Scherillo, *Arcadia*, ed. cit., p. ccxxxvi, where the author states his belief in the connection between the *De Partu Virginis* and the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, and promises to study the matter in detail elsewhere. Vivaldi (*op. cit.*, p. 26), attempts to disprove all connection between the *Gerusalemme* and the *De Partu Virginis*, at least so far as the descriptions of the monsters of the deep is concerned. He even denies that Tasso borrowed directly from Virgil, though the contrary is shown by *Gerioni* in Tasso. He says Virgil has 'angue di Lerna' while Tasso has 'Idre,' a distinction which I fail to grasp. Also, he calls attention to the fact that Tasso and Vida have 'Sfingi,' not found in Virgil. However, it is Sannazaro who introduces "Sphinges," a proof that Vida and Tasso imitated him as well as Virgil. If 'Idre' be really different from 'angue di Lerna,' there is one more proof of the influence of Sannazaro, who also has *Hydrae*. Furthermore, while it is true that Tasso does not, like Virgil, have 'Briareo,' that monster figures not only in Sannazaro's list, but is the most important of all the monsters in the *Christiad*, which, according to Vivaldi, Tasso imitated, to the exclusion of Virgil. Vivaldi himself confesses that "cani," which is suspiciously like Sannazaro's "Canes," is found in the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*. Morpurgo, who lays great emphasis upon the influence of Sannazaro on Tasso, says that Tasso owed to him 'tutta la mossa iniziale della *Gerusalemme*' (*Romanic Review*, I, 450). For the tremendous influence of Sannazaro upon his epoch, see Torraca, *Scritti critici*, 1907, pp. 65-69. Cf. also A. Sainati, *Iacopo Sannazaro e Joachim du Bellay*, Pisa, 1915.

² See *De Raptu Proserpinae*, I, 83-88, quoted above on p. 171, and the passage from the *De Partu Virginis*, I, 30, quoted above on p. 178. *Rimbomba* (iii) and *rimbombo* (viii) are doubtless imitated from Vida's "antra intonare profunda" (*op. cit.*, I, vs. 137).

The *De Raptu Proserpinae* has:

. . . . An forte iacentes
Ignavosque putas, quod non. . . . ¹

The *In Rufinum* has:

At nos indecores longo torpebimus aevo
Omnibus eiectae regnis?²

For purposes of reference, stanzas xi and xv of Canto IV are quoted here:

xi

Né ciò glu parve assai; ma in preda a morte,
Sol per farne piú danno, il figlio diede.
Ei venne, e ruppe le tartaree porte,
E porre osò ne' regni nostri il piede,
E trarne l'alme a noi dovute in sorte,
E riportarne al ciel sf ricche prede,
Vincitor trionfando, e in nostro scherno
L'insegne ivi spiegar del vinto Inferno.

xv

Ah! non fia ver; ché non sono anco estinti
Gli spirti in voi di quel valor primiero,
Quando di ferro e d'alte fiamme cinti
Pugnammo già contra il celeste impero.
Fummo, io no 'l niego, in quel conflitto vinti:
Pur non mancò virtute al gran pensiero.
Diede, che che si fosse, allor vittoria:
Rimase a noi d'invitto ardir la gloria.

VIII

Milton seems to have relished the idea of an infernal council. In *Paradise Lost*, we have the harangue of Satan to his followers in Book I; the great debate in Pandemonium, in Book II; the chorus of hisses which greeted Satan on his return to Pandemonium, in Book X. In the first book of *Paradise Regained*³ there is also an infernal council, on much the same model as the others. Furthermore, at the age of seventeen, Milton had already described an assembling of the wicked angels by Satan, preparatory to an attack upon Britain, which alone resisted successfully the plots of the Pope.⁴

¹ See above, p. 171.

² See above, p. 171.

³ Vs. 40 ff.

⁴ *In Quintum Novembris*.

The opening scene of *Paradise Lost* is in Hell, where Satan attempts to rouse his comrades with the hope of regaining Heaven. In order to discuss ways and means of waging war against the Almighty, a council is held in the palace of Pandemonium. The debate which ensues occupies most of Book II. After the opening address by Satan, Moloch, Belial, and Mammon offer their opinions. Satan, in his harangue in Book I, had suggested an attack on the new world, with its newly-created inhabitants. Beelzebub, now supporting Satan, also advises an attack. Apparently no one of the angels is hardy enough to venture upon the difficult quest of the new world. Satan finally volunteers to go himself. In Book X Satan, after finding the new world, and tempting man from Eden, returns to relate his triumph. He finds that he is greeted not with applause, as before, but with hisses, because he and his followers are changed to serpents.

As a counterpart to the councils in Hell, there is a council in Heaven, in Book III. The Almighty, aware of the mission of Satan, determines to frustrate him, and tells his son of the manner in which the world is to be redeemed, through the atonement. The son of God voluntarily accepts the great destiny which is laid upon him.

For his infernal councils, as well as for the council in Heaven, Milton imitated Tasso, Vida, Sannazaro, Boccaccio, and Claudian, in addition to Aeschylus, Dante, and Marino, the author of the *Strage degli innocenti*. His indebtedness to Tasso was so striking that it claimed attention at an early date, Addison in England and Voltaire in France being among those to remark upon it. The influence of Vida upon Milton was largely exerted indirectly, through Tasso, and has usually been studied in this manner.¹ Little has been said, however, about a direct influence of Sannazaro upon Milton,² and, so far as I am aware, nothing at all about a direct influence of Boccaccio on the great Puritan poet. Furthermore, there are one

¹ Cf. Flamini, *op. cit.*, p. 107.

² Marianna Woodhull, in *The Epic of Paradise Lost*, London, 1907, p. 142, declares: "The influence of the *De Partu Virginis* can be traced also only in such minor details as the descriptive passage of the flowers that lift their heads to greet the Virgin, as they also in *Paradise Lost* welcome the coming of Eve; the larger problem of the two works is not only different, but the method is in strong contrast." Morpurgo (*op. cit.*) associates the speech of God to the blessed in Heaven, which has been quoted in part from the *De Partu Virginis*, with the harangue delivered by Satan to his demons in *Paradise Lost*, I. Also, the long prophecy of David concerning Christ, he thinks, influenced Milton's

or two little gaps in the published material on Tasso's influence on Milton,¹ long though this question has been debated.

For example, Pommrich, following the commentators, rightly associates the description of the opening of Satan's address,

He called so loud that all the hollow deep
Of Hell resounded!²

with the passages in the *Gerusalemme* which we have already noted, passages which are themselves imitated from Vida, and Claudian, very likely with Sannazaro as a first inspiration. However, he might have said something about the remainder of his speech.

. . . Princes, Potentates,
Warriors, the flower of Heaven, once yours, now lost,

is doubtless a direct imitation of Vida's

Tartarei proceres, caelo gens orta sereno.³

The next lines are:

If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal spirits: or have ye chosen this place
After the toil of battle to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
To slumber here, or in the vales of Heaven?

For these, Tasso has:

Noi trarrem neghittosi i giorni e l'ore,
Né degna cura fia che'l cor n'accenda?

At the same time, Milton may have consulted the original passages in Claudian, also:

. . . An forte iacentes,
Ignavosque putas, quod non. . . .

and

At nos indecores longo torpebimus aevo
Omnibus eiectae regnis?⁴

"demon chorus." With the first statement I am disposed to agree. The second is acceptable also, provided "demon chorus" means the hissing of the serpents in Book X. Unfortunately, I am compelled to rely upon the summary of Morpurgo's book which appeared in the *Romanic Review*, I, but so far as I am able to judge, the only trouble with Morpurgo's argument is that it does not go quite far enough.

¹ For Tasso's influence upon Milton, the reader is referred to the standard commentators, especially some of the older ones, such as Todd. Cf. E. Pommrich, *Miltons Verhältnis zu Torquato Tasso*, Leipzig dissertation, 1902.

² Pommrich, p. 34. *Gerusalemme Liberata*, IV, stanzas iii and viii. Cf. *Paradise Lost*, I, 314 ff.

³ See above, p. 180.

⁴ See above, p. 171.

Milton continues:

Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the conqueror, who now beholds
Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood
With scattered arms and ensigns; till anon
His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern
The advantage, and descending, tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts
Transfix us to this gulf?

Here there is no exact parallel in any of the poems which we have been studying. Nevertheless the *De Partu Virginis*, the *Christiad*, and the *Gerusalemme Liberata* all refer to Christ's carrying the war into Hell, and (with the exception of the last-named work) to his driving the demons from Hell.

The last words of the speech in *Paradise Lost*

Arise, Arise, or be forever fallen!

may well have been suggested by Milton's own

Surge, age! surge, piger

in the *In Quintum Novembris*.

Pommrich also associates the descriptions of the hissing of the serpents on the return of Satan to Pandemonium with the picture of the monsters in Hell as described by Tasso:¹

. . . . Dreadful was the din
Of hissing through the hall, thick-swarmed now
With complicated monsters, head and tail,
Scorpion, and asp, and amphisbaena dire,
Cerastes horned, hydrus, and ellops drear,
And dipsas (not so thick swarmed once the soil
Bedropt with blood of Gorgon, or the isle
Ophiusa); but still greatest he the midst,
Now dragon grown, larger than whom the sun
Engendered in the Pythian vale on slime,
Huge Python.

However, "complicated monsters" seems an imitation of Vida's "bi-corpora monstra"² rather than of anything in Tasso. Furthermore,

¹ Pommrich, p. 36. See *Paradise Lost*, X, 521 ff.

² See also, p. 181. Another imitation of Vida by Milton is noted by Yardley in the third fragment of the Armada epic, where Milton's "Terror" is patterned on the familiar "Fear" of Vida and Boccaccio.

"Cerastes," mentioned neither by Tasso nor by Vida, is found in the *De Partu Virginis*.

The passage quoted from *Paradise Lost* is usually explained as an imitation of Pliny, who gives the names of most of the serpents here mentioned. In view of his other imitations, direct or indirect, of Sannazaro, it seems likely that Milton here, as frequently happened, first got his general idea from Italian authors, then filled in the details from his wonderful knowledge of classical literature.

The fact should especially be borne in mind that Satan's address to the demons in Book X, which immediately precedes the description of the serpents, is in a sense a replica, after achievement of his harangues of complaint in Books I and II. Naturally there is some repetition of the old phraseology, and it is therefore the more likely that Milton consulted here the same Italian authors as at the beginning of the epic. This conclusion is confirmed by the observation of Ingleby that in the preceding book of *Paradise Lost* there is a soliloquy of Satan which is also patterned on the infernal council described in the *Gerusalemme Liberata*.¹

. . . . or to spite us more—
Determined to advance into our room
A creature formed of earth, and him endow
Exalted from so base original,
With Heavenly spoils, our spoils.

This is clearly related to stanzas x and xi in Tasso's account of the council:

x

Ne' bei seggi ha l'uom chiamato,
L'uom vile, e di vil fango in terra nato,

xi

E riportarne al ciel sì ricche prede,
Vincitor trionfando, e in nostro scherno
L'insengne ivi spiegar del vinto Inferno.

In a speech of Christ in Book III of *Paradise Lost* the imitation of the second passage quoted from the *Gerusalemme Liberata*, and more especially of a passage in the *De Partu Virginis*, is very marked.

¹ *Paradise Lost*, IX, 147 ff. Cf. *Gerusalemme Liberata*, IV, stanzas x, xi. See H. Ingleby, in *Notes and Queries*, 10th series, I, 203.

The Milton commentators have here generally been satisfied to refer to the scriptural verses from which Milton's lines are ultimately drawn, without regard to the language of the Italian poets which undoubtedly was Milton's first inspiration:

But I shall rise victorious, and subdue
 My vanquisher, spoiled of his vaunted spoil.
 Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop
 Inglorious, of his mortal sting disarmed;
 I through the ample air in triumph high
 Shall lead Hell captive maugre Hell, and show
 The powers of Darkness bound. Thou, at the sight
 Pleased, out of Heaven shalt look down and smile,
 While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes,
 Death last, and with his carcase glut my grave;
 Then, with the multitude of my redeemed,
 Shall enter Heaven, long absent, and return.¹

If we compare this passage with one quoted from the prophecy of David in the *De Partu Virginis*,² we shall find the following resemblances:

Ipse catenato fessus per tartara collo
 Ducetur Pluton.

Shall lead Hell captive maugre Hell, and show
 The powers of Darkness bound.

. . . . laetoque Ducem clamore sequemur³
 Thou, at the sight
 Pleased

Victor io, bellator io

But I shall rise victorious

. . . . tu regna profunda,
 Tu Manes, Erebumque, Potestatesque coërces
 Aërias, Letumque tu sub Numine torques.

. . . . I ruin all my foes,
 Death last, and with his carcase glut the grave.

¹ *Paradise Lost*, III, 250 ff.

² See above, p. 177.

³ Cf. *Christiad*, I, vs. 192: Superi illudent toto aethere captis, etc.

Ille alto temone sedens, levibusque quadrigis
Lora dabit, volucresque reget placido ore iugales,

Non iam cornipedum ductos de semine equorum.

I through the ample air in triumph high
Shall lead

Though both Vida and Tasso here imitated Sannazaro, two features, the conquest of Death, and the triumphant ride of the Savior through the air, are common to Sannazaro and Milton alone. For the last two lines quoted from Milton,

Then with the multitude of my redeemed
Shall enter Heaven. . . .

parallels in Sannazaro, Vida, and Tasso are numerous, and need not be cited now. What is probable is that Milton got his first pattern from Sannazaro and others, then remodeled their language to make it conform still more closely to that of the Scriptures. In fact, the whole idea of representing the Father and the Son as speaking virtually the exact language of the Scriptures throughout the *Paradise Lost*, while obvious enough, may possibly have been first suggested to Milton by his reading of Italian authors.

It is also more than likely that Milton was influenced by Sannazaro in the long prophecy of future events, down to the second coming of Christ, which the angel Gabriel delivers to Adam in Books XI and XII of *Paradise Lost*, in view of the fact that the prophecy of David concerning the life of Christ, in the *De Partu Virginis*, is of somewhat similar style and of about the same length. It is likely, too, Milton had in mind the summary of the Old and New Testaments which Ilario delivered to Florio in Book V of the *Filocolo*. Florio listens to Ilario with much the same rapt attention that Adam shows to Michael.

Milton also imitated Boccaccio, consciously or unconsciously, in another respect. When he resumed work on his masterpiece, eighteen years after his return from Italy, it was Milton's purpose to begin with what is now Book III, where Satan, already escaped from Hell, finds himself in the Universe, and makes his beautiful apostrophe to the Sun.¹ Later Milton not only introduced an infernal

¹ D. Masson, *The Life of John Milton*, London, 1877, Vol. V, pp. 406, 407.

council into his *Paradise Lost* which was patterned ultimately, if not directly, on the one in the *Filocolo*; but, as in the case of the *Filocolo*, it was by means of this infernal council that the transformation of *Paradise Lost* to the epic form was accomplished.

Of course Milton's familiarity not only with what he calls the "lofty fables" of the Middle Ages, but also with the "romances" of that period, is beyond dispute.¹ That Milton had some of the old "romances" in mind when he penned Book I of *Paradise Lost* is proved by the lines of the poem itself.²

To summarize: the pagan suggestion of the infernal council appears in Claudian; the Christian tradition begins with the Gospel of Nicodemus. From the French version of this Gospel, Robert de Boron drew the condensed account in the *Merlin*. Boccaccio was undoubtedly influenced by the *Merlin*, which he probably knew in one of the extant Italian versions. The infernal council in the *Filocolo* directly influenced those in Vida's *Christiad* and Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, as well as the address of the Father in Heaven in Sannazaro's *De Partu Virginis*. Vida and Tasso also borrowed from Claudian's *De Raptu Proserpinae* and from Sannazaro's *De Partu Virginis*. Milton's *Paradise Lost* harks back to Tasso and to Vida, especially in Books I and II. Indirectly Milton was frequently influenced by Sannazaro, and directly in several places. In Books XI and XII Milton may also have been influenced by the long prophecy of David in the *De Partu Virginis*, probably also by the long discourse of Ilario in the *Filocolo*.

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¹ See *Prose Works*, London, 1901, Vol. III, p. 118 (*An Apology for Smectymnus*).

² See *Paradise Lost*, I, 580 ff.